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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of study abroad on college students participating in the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, sponsored 60 percent by the German government and 40 percent by the U.S. government. The study's main context focused on the problem that American-sponsored programs (in which over 80 percent of study- abroad students participate) often have less exacting language requirements and fail to immerse students in the foreign culture. A 41-item survey was completed by 166 former participants in the Congress-Bundestag work-study program. Survey questions were organized into the following topics: program of participation, choosing a program, educational components, extracurricular and cocurricular experiences, financing, outcomes, demographics, and summation questions. Respondents were very positive about the generous funding provided, immersion in the German language and culture, travel opportunities, increased job skills, and meetings with dignitaries and host country residents. Respondents were least satisfied with program administration as reflected in undesirable placements, insufficient screening of prospective applicants, and not enough predeparture information. Results suggest that American programs should integrate students better with host country nationals, provide better funding for students, and provide work-study career development opportunities. The survey questionnaire and cover letter are appended. (DB)

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ED 420 288

The *Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals:* What are the Effects on U.S. Students?

By

Iris Dolores Thot

An Executive Summary

Claremont, CA 1998

HE0 31 345

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Chapter One: Nature of the Problem

This case study addresses the following situation, or "problem." According to Open Doors 1992/93: Report on International Educational Exchange, 81.6% of American students going abroad in 1991/92 were sponsored by a U.S. institution. (Zikopoulos, 1993) Although certainly of high quality, American-sponsored programs often fail to give students the "real" flavor of the foreign country: "Special university courses for U.S. or other foreign students generally have less exacting language requirements than regular courses." (Steen, 1996, p. 5)

The problem is that students participating with an American program very often tend to return to the United States with less knowledge of language and culture than their compatriots who participate in a foreign government-sponsored program.

A student who participated in the American-sponsored Alma College Program in Kassel, Germany, has this word of warning for future study abroad students: "Try to avoid hanging out with other Americans. It will help to meet German people if you are not in a large group of Americans." (Director, International Program, Alma College, 1996, p. 2)

On the other hand, the experience of the following student who participated in a German government-sponsored internship in Berlin had this to say: "My objective in accepting this Praktikum (internship) was largely to improve my language skills. Under

this criteria I think the position was very good. The people I worked with spoke only German with me and were always very interested in my experiences here in Germany." (CDS International, 1996, p. 3)

Why is this an important topic? As a general rule, American students lag behind much of the rest of the world in the realm of study abroad. Although there were some 419,585 foreign students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities in the academic year 1991/92, the United States sent a fraction of its own students—71,154—to study in another country. (Zikopoulos, 1993, pgs. v & 87) It is no secret that the U.S. is far behind other industrialized nations in terms of both foreign languages and an appreciation of other cultures.

As a superpower that constantly plays "peacekeeper," America should depend more on the education of its youth in foreign languages and cultures than on the sending of troops to foreign shores; language is perhaps the key to creating peace in the world. Language is the vehicle for culture. Language is the means through which individuals and nations present themselves to the world. By teaching language, we also teach understanding of the thought processes and world vision of other cultures.

The urgency of sending more American students abroad cannot be overstated. It is only through residence and study within another country that a foreign language and culture really become second nature. This study has shown that former study abroad participants recognize this fact. One of the survey participants commented that the following incident was the best thing that happened to him while abroad: "Being mistaken for a German person by other Europeans as well as Germans."

The sample of the study is made up of students who went abroad on the *Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange*, administered by *CDS International*. When asked why they took part, every respondent had a different reply: "Generous stipend;" "It enabled me, financially, to live overseas and gain and integrate new knowledge through new experiences in a new environment," "Internship opportunity in Germany which would improve career opportunities following program," "Provided more scholarship money," "I wasn't really interested in expensive semester-abroad programs—I couldn't afford them and wanted more freedom." I think that a college-sponsored exchange would not have led to some of the career opportunities received."

The above comments elaborate upon the reason why students chose a German program. For, although there are some very good American-sponsored programs, this study hypothesizes that the lasting effect of language and culture can be—more often than not—realized by a foreign-based program in that particular country. The words of the following respondent says it best: "I was out of my comfort zone and not around other Americans most of the year, so I had to rely on myself more and had much more of an opportunity to get to know the culture on its own terms."

It should be mentioned however, that, although most research on study abroad has been done on regular study abroad programs which accommodate the vast majority of students going abroad, very little emphasis has been put upon a systematic study of government-sponsored programs. The present study deals with only one of the actual government-sponsored programs in existence, however. Even though many more programs were contacted for student lists, privacy laws protecting former participants often prevented these programs from providing the necessary information.

Although only a small minority of American higher education students going abroad actually chooses a foreign government-sponsored program, it is hoped that the research in question will give some insight on those who do choose this type of program, and on what the lasting effects on students are long after the program is over.

A 41-item survey instrument was developed, which was sent out to former participants of the ***Congress-Bundestag*** program, sponsored in large part by the German government. Three hundred one questionnaires were sent out to students who had taken part in the program, resulting in 125 questionnaires returned due to invalid addresses. Of the remaining 176 surveys, 120 were mailed back, producing a mail response rate of 68.1%.

The survey results offer valuable insights into what students perceive as the advantages and disadvantages of going abroad on a government-sponsored program. Since the bulk of research conducted in the field of study abroad has been done on American-sponsored programs this particular study will undoubtedly be of interest to future researchers in the field.

It is hoped that this case study will also shed light on what make foreign government-sponsored program effects on American students different than those of U.S.-sponsored programs. The author wishes it to be known, however, that all students are different, and although foreign government-sponsored programs may be suitable for some individuals, they are not for every student.

Chapter Two: Methods

This study attempts to analyze and measure the effect of the study abroad experience on the American students who participated in the *Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange*, sponsored about 60.0% by the German *Bundestag* (similar to the House of Representatives) and 40.0% by the *Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Information Agency (USIA).*

A questionnaire was constructed to ask questions of the recent participants of this program, going back 14 years. Names of former participants were obtained through *CDS International*, which administers the *Congress-Bundestag* program.

Survey/Interview Protocol

Former participants were sent questionnaires via U.S. mail. The questionnaire consisted of 41 items and was organized according to the following key topics: **Program of Participation, Choosing a Program, Educational Components, Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Experiences, Financing, Outcomes, Demographics,** and **Summation Questions.**

In addition to the surveys sent per mail, forty-six former participants, fresh back from Germany in July of 1997, were given the questionnaire to fill out during a debriefing meeting sponsored by *CDS International.*

Sampling

The eventual total sample included 166 American subjects who participated since 1984.

Address and Program-Description of the Selected Program

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals

CDS International
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001-5010
USA

Open to American students between the ages of 18 and 24, this program includes scholarships for work-study, in-plant training, and apprenticeship programs. The scholarship pays for room and board, tuition, plane fare, as well as other expenses.

Background/History on the Selected Program

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals:

The one year study-internship exchange program is designed to strengthen ties between the younger generations of the United States and Germany. Established in 1984 as part of former President Reagan's *International Exchange Initiative*, the program combines the efforts of both government and private sectors. Conceived and supported by the members of the German *Bundestag* and the United States *Congress*, the program is financially supported by the German *Bundestag* and the *Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Information Agency (USIA)* under the authority of the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961.

CDS International, Inc. is designated to administer the program in the United States through a grant agreement with the *USIA*. In Germany, the program is administered by *CDS International's* partner organization, the *Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft, e.V.*, of Cologne, Germany. (CDS International, 1997)

Selection of the Program:

The preceding program was selected with several factors in mind. First, the program had to be sponsored, at least partially, by the German government. Second, student lists had to be made available to the researcher. (Many programs contacted were unwilling, or unable, to provide such information because of confidentiality policies).

The selection process for the students in this study was based on the following factors:

- Participation in the program within the last 14 years.
- Availability to fill out a questionnaire (person at a valid United States or foreign address).

Response Rate:

Since its inception in 1984, the *Congress-Bundestag* program has sent hundreds of young Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 to Germany on a work-study program. Emily Topf, formerly of *CDS International* in New York was willing to help in the research effort, and provided a list of 531 participants between the years 1984 and 1996.

Three hundred one names from the list were randomly selected to send surveys. Eleven people on the list resided in Germany. In June 1997 those 11 participants were sent questionnaires and self-addressed and stamped (with German stamps) envelopes. The ratio of surveys that went to women with those that went to men was exactly equal. One hundred fifty-one questionnaires were sent to women, and 150 were sent to men.

Out of the 301 questionnaires, 125 questionnaires were returned due to invalid addresses. Since the *CDS* participants are relatively young, and not yet necessarily settled into a home and neighborhood, moving is common. Of the remaining 176 questionnaires, a total of 120 surveys—69 female and 51 male—were returned producing a mail response rate of 68.1%.

In addition Emily Topf administered the questionnaire at a debriefing meeting for returning 1996-97 participants in July, 1997 at *CDS International* headquarters in New York City. All 62 participants—37 women and 25 men—were at the meeting, but, due to time-constraints, only 46 students—29 women and 17 men—completed the questionnaire. This 46-student total was added to the *Congress-Bundestag* questionnaires returned by mail, producing a total of 166 completed questionnaires.

Table 2.1 Response Rate By Program

	Total # of Surveys Mailed 1	**Total # of Surveys Returned for Lack of Valid Address** 2	**Total # of Presumed Valid Addresses** 3	**Total # of Usable Surveys** 4
Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange	**301**	**125**	**176**	**120 from U.S. mail, 46 from meeting in N.Y.**

Chapter Three: Results Section

Though a lengthy process, the detailed forty-one-item survey instrument was constructed to tell the "story," that is, the experiences of this particular subset of study abroad students. (Note: The survey is included in Appendix B.)

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the questionnaire was organized according to several topics, including A) Program of Participation; B) Choosing a Program; C) Educational Components; D) Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Experiences; E) Financing; F) Outcomes; G) Demographics, and H) Summation Questions. It is important to point out that the results of the study follow the order of the questionnaire exactly, with no deviations.

Program of Participation

Those who answered the survey had all chosen the *Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals* as their study abroad program choice. Females were over-all very well represented in the sample with 97 of the total participants, while males trailed that number with 67; there were two missing.

In terms of ethnicity, Caucasians accounted for 147 of the total 166 program participants, while all other ethnicities trailed significantly. Asians comprised 8 of the

total sample, African Americans 2, Native Americans 1, two identified themselves as "Other," and 6 were missing.

A majority of the students polled took part within the last four years for two significant reasons. Although the researcher received addresses of all participants since the inception of the program in 1984, a high percentage of the older addresses were no longer current, and many of those surveys were returned as undeliverable. The surveys were much more likely to reach a former participant if the address the program had was more recent. Also, and most consequentially, Emily Topf, Assistant Program Officer of *CDS International* in New York, provided the opportunity to send surveys to her to be administered to returning program participants (1996-97) from Germany. A total of 46 surveys were returned in this manner.

Choosing a Program

Students reported that they had found out about the existence of the program in a myriad of ways: written information from the academic department, written information on the program itself, posters, a faculty member or academic advisor, special information meeting, "word of mouth" from former participants, and "word of mouth" from fellow students/friends.

Table 3.1 Learning About The Existence Of A Government-Sponsored Program

Written Info.- Depart.	Written Info/Broch	Pos-ter	Faculty Member	Info. Mtg.	Former Part.	Friends	Other
12.0%	22.0%	14.0%	34.3%	0	10.0%	10.8%	16.3%

The highest percentage of total participants (34.3%) found out about their program through a faculty member, while the lowest percentage (0%) found out through an information meeting. Percentage values in between included 22.3% for total students who learned about their program through a brochure, and 16.3% who learned about the program through other means.

Some survey recipients chose to comment further on how they learned about the program. "Saw a poster in the German Dept. of my college and was recommended to the program by a faculty member as well." "I was living as an Au Pair in Munich and a friend told me about it. I applied from Germany."

Students had a great number of different reasons for choosing a German government-sponsored program rather than a program sponsored by an American college/university. Some participants, like this former student, applied on a whim. "I saw the notice in a local newspaper and applied. I made no conscious decision to choose one program over another. In hindsight, I'm glad I ended up with a government-sponsored program." Others preferred the fact that the *Congress-Bundestag* program accepted applicants who had already graduated. "I had already graduated from college, and heard about this program."

Financial funding came up again and again as the reason former participants chose their programs. "If I had went [sic] with my university, I would have had to pay full tuition."

Some of the other reasons included academic background. For a former technical college student, "This (*CDS*) was the only opportunity I had." This student is probably

referring to the lack of access to traditional American study abroad programs for vocational school students.

The factors that pulled many students out of their comfort zones at home and into a foreign culture abroad are varied and diverse.

Among the reasons most influencing students to study abroad were improved career prospects through fluency in German. Out of 158 respondents who answered this question, 61 indicated that fluency for their job was very important, 35 stated that it was important, and 29 indicated that it was important most of the time.

Another very important factor influencing the students in the survey to study abroad was improvement in their foreign language skills in German. Out of 140 people answering the question, 82 indicated that language skills improvement had been very important in influencing their study abroad decision. Twenty-nine stated that it was important, and 17 stated that it was important most of the time.

Getting an understanding of the host country was also of utmost importance to the majority of respondents. Out of 165 who answered this particular question, 96 replied that this was very important, while 49 indicated that it was important, and 16 said that it was important most of the time.

By far the reason which most influenced respondents to travel abroad was simply that—to travel abroad. Out of the 166 who answered the question, 128 replied that travel abroad was very important in making their decision. Twenty-seven indicated that it was important, and 8 mentioned that it was important most of the time.

The people who most influenced the respondents to venture abroad turned out to be themselves.

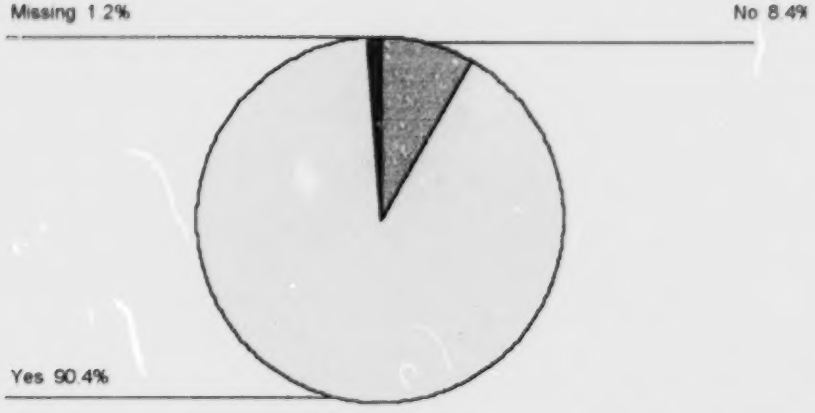
Table 3.2 Who Most Influenced Decision To Go Abroad

Myself	Sibling	Parents	Friends	Faculty Memb.	Advisor	Other
90.4%	6.0%	19.9%	9.6%	25.3%	7.2%	10.2%

The majority of students gave themselves the idea to study abroad. More than eighty percent of men replied that they gave themselves the idea to study abroad, while 93.8% of the women said the same. Please refer to **Figure 3.1** below.

Least influential were counselors. Of the men polled, only 9.0% said that a counselor had influenced their decision, while 6.2% of women said the same thing. The two genders, combined, resulted in 7.2% saying that a counselor had helped them decide to go abroad.

Figure 3.1 Who Most Influenced Decision To Go – By Myself



The most important reason participants chose the program varied. For some, money was an issue, while for others it was the fact that the *Congress-Bundestag* program accepted persons who already had a Bachelor's degree.

Finally, some students chose the program as a stepping off point to a foreign culture and land: "I had never been out of the US before and I wanted a program that offered a lot of guidance and support." "The ability to live w/ a German family, work & study was my dream program." "To enhance my understanding of Germany & politics."

Most students applied to only one program.

Table 3.3 Applying To More Than One Program

No 1	Yes 2
83.7%	16.3%

Over 87.0% of females applied to only one program, while 70.6% of males did the same. A breakdown by ethnicity revealed that the two African American participants applied to only one program, while 84.4% of Anglos, 87.5% of Asian Americans, and the one Native American student did the same. This may mean that these particular applicants were highly convinced of the quality of the program they were applying to.

Table 3.4 Accepted To More Than One Program

No 1	Yes 2
83.7%	16.3%

Of the minority of students who did apply to more than one program, the majority of them did not get accepted to more than one. Of 144 respondents who answered the question, only 20 (12.0%) said that they had been accepted to more than one program, while 124 (74.4%) answered the question with no.

The students surveyed for this study were for the most part very satisfied with the program.

Table 3.5 Preferring Another Program

No 1	Yes 2
80.7%	7.8%

Of those who answered the question, more than 80.0% said that they would not have preferred another program even if they had been accepted by one. Of the small number of students who said they would have preferred another program (7.8%), the reasons were varied.

Some respondents would have preferred another location: "If the choice had been Italy, I would have chosen it." Others would have preferred more flexibility: "Less restrictive fellowship/work abroad program." Yet others would have preferred a more prestigious program: "Fulbright would have had more prestige, more flexibility."

Finally, there were those former participants who would originally have preferred another program, but then counted their blessings in the end: "I also applied for a *Rhodes* scholarship. In retrospect, however, I'm very happy I went to Germany on the *CDS* program instead."

Educational Components

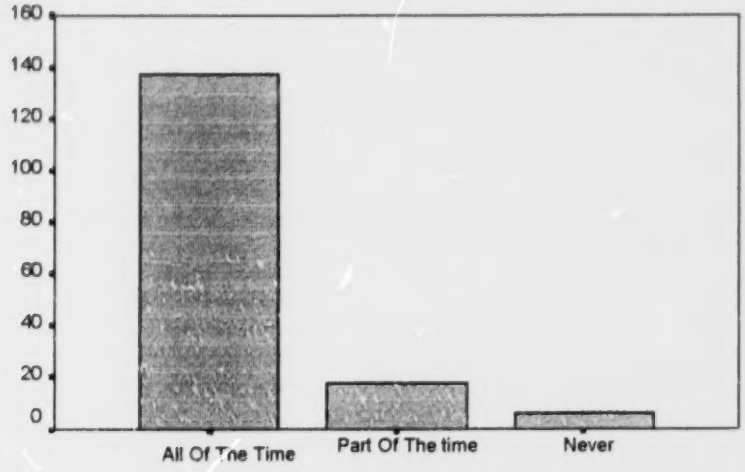
The great majority of the sample replied that classes, seminars, lectures, etc., were conducted in the target language.

Table 3.6 Classes Taught In The Foreign Language

All of the time 1	Part of the time 2	Never 3
82.5%	10.8%	3.6%

Out of 147 respondents who answered the question, 137 (82.5%) replied that the target language was used the entire time in a classroom or lecture setting. Eighteen students (10.8%) said that the language was used part of the time, whereas only 6 (3.6%) replied that the target language was never used at all. Please refer to **Figure 3.2** below.

Figure 3.2 Classes Taught In The Foreign Language



Classes Taught In The Foreign Language

In terms of language ability (minimal, moderate, highly proficient and fluent) before

and after, program participation, as a whole, seems to have made a difference in the language proficiency of the overall sample.

Table 3.7 Foreign Language Proficiency Before The Program

	Minimal 1	Moderate 2	Highly Proficient 3	Fluent 4
Speaking	37.0%	36.0%	19.9%	3.6%
Reading	33.0%	38.0%	25.3%	4.2%
Writing	41.0%	42.0%	13.9%	1.2%

Table 3.7a Foreign Language Proficiency After The Program

	Minimal 1	Moderate 2	Highly Proficient 3	Fluent 4
Speaking	1.2%	90.0%	44.6%	34.3%
Reading	1.8%	15.0%	58.4%	24.1%
Writing	5.4%	30.0%	52.4%	14.5%

Before the program, the participants in the sample varied greatly in their foreign language proficiency. Slightly under 4.0% considered themselves to be fluent, 19.9% highly proficient, 36.7% moderate, and 37.3% minimal in terms of speaking. It appears that the majority of the sample did not consider themselves to have fully mastered spoken language before the program.

After the program there were obvious improvements in all three language skill areas—speaking, reading and writing. More than the majority of respondents felt that their spoken language was highly proficient after the program. Another 58.4% felt that their reading abilities were highly proficient, while just over 50.0% felt that in terms of written language, they were also in the highly proficient category.

When any student spends a certain period of time abroad problems are bound to occur, and this sample was no exception.

Table 3.8 Significant Problems During Study Abroad

	Minimal or no problems 1	Occasional problems 2	Problems about half of the time 3	Significant problems 4	Serious problems 5
Courses in F.L.	15.7%	20.5%	36.7%	16.9%	6.6%
Classes too advanced	28.3%	30.1%	25.3%	6.6%	6.0%
Classes too easy	17.5%	16.3%	13.9%	3.6%	2.4%
Diff. in teaching	30.7%	22.3%	30.7%	9.6%	2.4%
Helpful teaching staff	35.5%	18.7%	25.3%	12.7%	4.2%
Diff. in class size	41.6%	24.1%	21.1%	10.2%	0
Admin.	22.3%	18.1%	22.3%	23.5%	10.8%
Climate	47.0%	24.7%	18.1%	6.0%	3.6%
Food	57.5%	27.1%	11.4%	2.4%	1.2%
Health	61.4%	23.5%	10.8%	2.4%	0.6%
Lifestyles in host country	41.6%	37.3%	16.9%	2.4%	1.2%
Comm. in F.L.	22.9%	39.8%	26.5%	6.0%	2.4%
Not enough time for travel	38.6%	28.3%	21.7%	7.2%	1.2%
Other	3.0%	0.6%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%

Administration was one of the areas where significant and even serious problems did occur. Overall, 23.5% of students said they had significant problems with administration, 22.3% said they had problems in this area about half of the time, 18.1% said they had occasional problems, while 10.8% said these problems were serious.

An overwhelming percentage (61.4%) of overall participants reported minimal or no problems with health while abroad. Twenty-three and a half percent reported

occasional problems, while 10.8% said health problems were a factor about half of the time. Only 2.4% said that health posed significant problems, with 0.6% saying that the problems were serious.

Communicating in the foreign language in everyday life presented more problems, overall, than health, re-emphasizing the fact, perhaps, that important foreign language education is invaluable in conjunction with study abroad. More than 20.0% of the overall sample reported minimal or no problems with using the foreign language in everyday interactions. Approximately 39.8% had occasional problems, 26.5% had problems about half of the time, 6.0% experienced significant problems, and 2.4% had serious problems.

There were also problems inside the classroom. Overall, students seemed to have problems with the different teaching methods employed by the German teaching staff. Only 30.7% of the overall sample stated there had been no problems, while a full 65.0% had experienced one problem or another with teaching methods.

Outside the classroom there were problems with host country lifestyles. Although the overall sample showed 41.6% of participants as experiencing minimal or no problems with different customs, etc., 37.3% experienced occasional problems, 16.9% had problems about half of the time, 2.4% had significant problems, and 1.2% had serious problems adjusting to the "ways of the land."

Finally, some students certainly wished their programs had given them more time to travel. Of the overall sample, only 38.6% considered this issue not to be a problem.

This particular sample of students was very happy, overall, with the academic portion of the program. Out of 163 persons who responded, thirty (18.1%) thought

academics in the program to have been excellent, while 52 (31.3%) considered them very good. Only 4.2% thought that academics were poor in the program.

Students had some to say about their academic experience. One *Congress-Bundestag* participant directly related her rating to the very good experience she felt she had received: "Rec'd extensive language training & attended numerous conferences."

Indoctrination—the distribution of a set of political or national ideas—was considered to be present in the programs by more than half of the total sample.

Table 3.9 Extent Of Indoctrination Of Program

No indoct. 1	A little indoc. 2	Indoc. half of the time 3	Sing. indoc. 4	Much indoc. 5
27.7%	20.5%	22.9%	11.4%	4.8%

Only 27.7% thought there to be no trace of indoctrination, while 20.5% believed there to be indoctrination some of the time, and 22.9% said indoctrination was a factor half of the time. Just over 11.0% felt there to be significant indoctrination by the program, and 4.8% of the sample felt there to be a lot of indoctrination.

Student reactions to indoctrination varied. Some participants, such as this *Congress-Bundestag* student, felt that only part of the program was characterized by indoctrination: "Actually, some teaching in Berlin felt "pushy" and biased. Overall, excellent." Another participant was more specific: "3 day-orientation workshop, 7 day-mid year workshop, and 2 day-final."

There were also respondents who felt there was no indoctrination in the program. "We were fully integrated w/ other German students (or at least I was), I never got the impression that we were treated differently or given different info." Finally, this

student comment says it all for those who believe there was no indoctrination: "We did have a couple seminars including visiting the Bundestag in Bonn, but I never felt "indoctrinated."

Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Experiences

One thing is certain, and that is that participants certainly didn't need to be "indoctrinated" to partake in extra-curricular and co-curricular experiences. This survey showed that students took part in certain activities very frequently, although some activities were more popular than others. Among the most frequent were the following activities: independent travel (the all out favorite), culture, social activities, program organized events, independent reading, and watching television.

Table 3.10 Frequency Of Extra-Curricular And Co-Curricular Experiences

	Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5
Sports	20.5%	22.9%%	27.1%%	19.3%	9.7%
Music	59.0%	18.7%	8.4%	6.6%	6.6%
Hobbies	30.1%	21.7%	25.3%	13.9%	8.4%
Clubs	49.4%	23.5%%	13.3%	9.6%	3.0%
Work	9.6%	2.4%	3.6%	30.7%	51.2%
Culture	5.4%	16.3%	41.0%	36.7%	99.4%
Social	1.2%	5.4%	18.1%	34.3%	40.4%
Spectator Sports	36.1%	28.3%	21.7%	12.0%	1.2%
Travel	1.8%	6.0%	21.1%	33.7%	36.7%
Reading	5.4%	15.7%	24.7%	26.5%	26.5%
Telev.	14.5%	26.5%	25.9%	22.3%	10.2%
Program events	5.4%	20.5%	34.9%	24.1%	13.3%
Other	0	0	1.2%	1.8%	0.6%

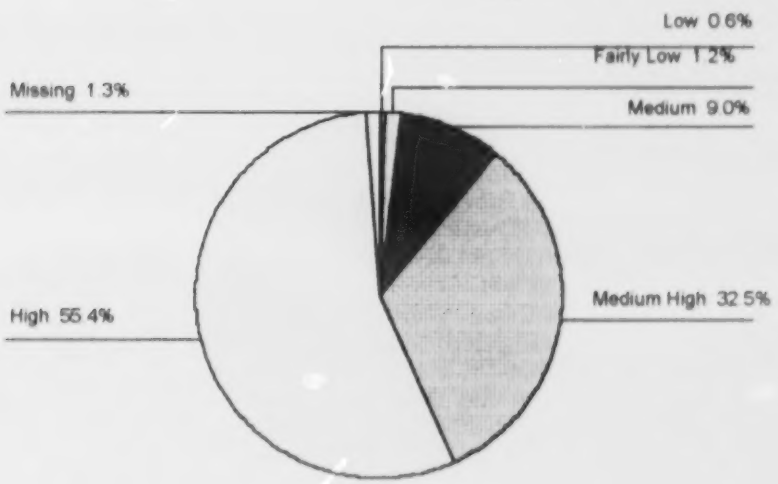
Table 3.11 Level Of Satisfaction Of Extra-Curricular And Co-Curricular Experiences

	Low 1	Fairly Low 2	Medium 3	Medium High 4	High 5
Sports	9.0%	5.4%	16.9%	22.9%	28.9%
Music	15.1%	5.4%	13.9%	11.4%	17.5%
Hobbies	9.6%	6.0%	21.7%	22.3%	17.5%
Clubs	11.4%	6.6%	18.1%	19.3%	11.4%
Work	4.2%	9.6%	18.1%	24.7%	37.3%
Culture	0.6%	1.2%	9.0%	32.5%	55.4%
Social.	1.2%	2.4%	9.6%	29.5%	55.4%
Spectator Sports	10.8%	5.4%	18.1%	20.5%	23.5%
Travel	0.6%	1.8%	5.4%	19.9%	70.5%
Reading	3.0%	5.4%	17.5%	31.1%	38.6%
Telev.	4.2%	7.2%	36.7%	21.1%	20.5%
Program events	4.8%	7.8%	21.1%	28.9%	30.7%
Other	0	0	0.6%	0.6%	2.4%

Engaging in independent travel was, without question, the activity respondents took part in the most, with only 1.8% saying that they never traveled. Satisfaction levels for travel were excellent, with 70.5% saying that they received high satisfaction from travel, and only 0.6% receiving low satisfaction.

Another very popular activity which was engaged in frequently was that of the culture (attending cultural events: folk dancing, Oktoberfest, etc.) of the host country. Out of all participants, only 5.4 % reported never attending a cultural event, while 55.4% of those who attended those events received high satisfaction from them. Please refer to **Figure 3.3** below.

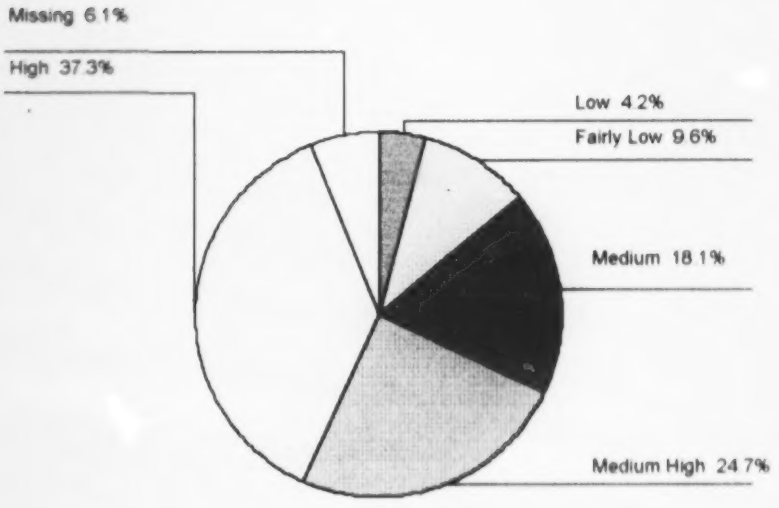
Figure 3.3 Level Of Satisfaction Of Culture



Events organized by the programs (lectures, seminars, field trips, etc.) had fairly good attendance. Of all participants, only 5.4% never attended such events. 13.3% reported attending very frequently, 24.1% said they attended frequently, 34.9% said they attended sometimes, and 20.5% rarely attended program events.

All *Congress-Bundestag* participants held jobs (a five- to-six-month internship) while in the host country. Since all participants in this program were expected to work, one can assume that the participation rate was 100%. The overall level of satisfaction with work was 37.3% high, 24.7% medium high, 18.1% medium, 9.6% fairly low, and 4.2% low. Please refer to **Figure 3.4** below.

Figure 3.4 Level Of Satisfaction Of Work



Many of the respondents admitted that there were various activities done while in the program that they would have been less likely to do at home. Some of these activities included traveling. "To visit Berlin." "I traveled, socialized, and met a lot more new people than I usually would at home in America." "Traveling long

distances." "The whole year: in general, traveling alone." "Travel opportunities to various cities—Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Potsdam, Munich, Cologne, Hannover, etc."

Still other students felt that cultural attractions were things which they were less likely to take part in at home: "Attending opera, plays and classical concerts as well as museums." "Dining in student restaurants; cinéma; concerts in the park" "I also visited cultural institutions (i.e. museums, operas, etc.)." "I pursued the arts much more than I ever had. It was a very satisfying activity."

Travel was an activity which was engaged in at different times for different individuals in the sample; for some, the ideal time to travel was before the program, for others it was during the program, and for others it was afterwards.

Table 3.12 Independent Travel

	Immediately Prior to Program 1	During Program 2	After End of Program 3
None at all	50.0%	0.6%	13.3%
Up to 10 Days	15.7%	9.6%	21.1%
11-20 Days	1.8%	21.7%	25.3%
21-30 Days	1.2%	21.7%	13.9%
More than 30 Days	5.4%	42.8%	9.6%

Most travel undertaken by the sample tended to take place both during and after the program. Just under 42.8% of former participants claimed to have traveled during the program for a period of more than thirty days, while 25.3% said that they traveled after the program (for 11-20 days).

Travel did not necessarily take place prior to begin of the program. Half of the respondents stated that they did not travel before.

It is easy to see why participants traveled during their individual programs. Class field trips, willing travel companions from the program, and just the simple reason of already being in Europe, all most likely led participants to travel while on the program.

Individual travel experiences seem to have made lasting impressions on this sample. Students raved about their most rewarding travels: "All were very rewarding-But skiing in Germany, Austria & Switzerland were the most fun. Although, Berlin was very interesting particularly now that the Wall was destroyed." "Bike around the Bodensee." "Visiting many regions in Germany allowing me to take in the vast differences from region to region within Germany." "Travelling with my mother for the very first time." "Well, Vienna and Paris, they are beautiful places to visit."

Travel was not just about seeing places, it was about seeing and meeting new people: "Meeting new people, gaining a new perspective on my own country, independence." "Eurail through Europe. One had to learn how to economize & spend money accordingly. It was the best way to meet other people, also." "Realizing that a country the size of Montana (Germany) is not as homogenous as I had thought. Everyone is different, whether it's the food, customs, dialects, or beliefs—even though they all live in the same country." "Local travel in the surrounding areas of my host family because it really helped me understand the people of that particular region." Although travel enabled participants to meet all sorts of people, the program facilitated even more significant meetings with certain people.

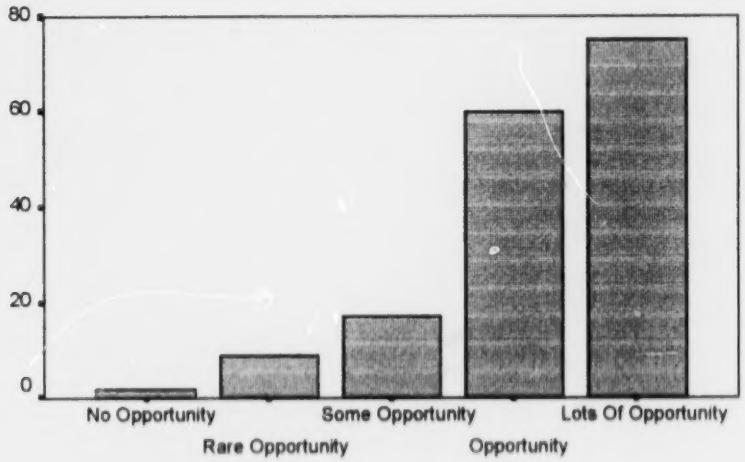
Table 3.13 Extent To Which Program Enabled Contact With Certain People

	No Opport. 1	Rare Opport. 2	Some Opport. 3	Opport. 4	Lots of Opport. 5
Students of the host country	0	8.4%	22.3%	28.9%	39.8%
Teaching staff of the host country	7.8%	28.3%	26.5%	21.1%	15.1%
People from outside the program	1.2%	5.4%	10.2%	36.1%	45.2%
Cultural figures from the host country	24.1%	24.1%	31.3%	10.8%	6.6%
Govern. figures from the host country	6.6%	32.5%	28.3%	18.7%	12.7%
Other	0.6%	0	1.2%	1.8%	7.8%

The majority of respondents (96.9%) claimed that their program facilitated some kind of meeting with people from outside the program. Another big percentage of the sample (99.4%) said that the program helped with meeting host country students, while 91.0% of former participants said that they had become acquainted with teachers of the host country through the program. Please refer to **Figure 3.5** on page 28.

Still more than half the sample (57.6%) stated that the particular program aided in meeting government figures from the host country. Slightly less than half (47.6%) of the respondents gave the program credit with helping them meet cultural figures from the host country.

Figure 3.5 Extent To Which Program Enabled Contact With People Outside Of Program



It is clear that the program included in this study made many meetings between participants and people outside the program possible. When asked if important governmental or cultural people had been met, a full 76.5% replied that the meeting would not have occurred without the program's intervention.

Students elaborated on the meetings that the program arranged for them. One respondent explained that, although she met politicians through the program, she felt they were not there of their own free will: "They were formal meetings, mostly with mayors of small communes. I had the feeling that with one exception, the officials felt this was an obligation they would rather not have done."

Most *Congress-Bundestag* participants got to meet with their assigned member of the German Bundestag, equivalent to the American Congress: "I went to Bonn with

my Bundestag representative for a few days. He gave me a tour of German politics." I met my government sponsor and was invited to participate in a weekend trip to Bonn." "My government sponsor facilitated those meetings." Sometimes, however, meetings did not take place: "I got sick, and so could not meet with my sponsor."

Financing

Perhaps the question of all time for students planning to go abroad is: "How much is it going to cost?" Finances most definitely influenced respondents in choosing a program which would subsidize a good deal of the costs of going abroad.

Table 3.14 Expenses Paid By Program

Quite a Bit	Not at All 1	Somewhat 2	About Half 3	Quite a Bit 4	To a Great Extent 5
Congress-Bundestag	**0**	**1.2%**	**9.0%**	**30.7%**	**57.8%**

According to participants, the program paid the majority of expenses. More than half of the respondents (57.8%) credited the program for carrying a great extent of the financial burden. More than thirty percent said that the program paid quite a bit of the expenses, whereas 9.0% said that half of the costs had been paid. Only 1.2% said that the costs were somewhat paid, with none reporting nothing being paid by the program.

Students were generally grateful that their programs helped out with finances: "*CDS* was very generous in helping to cover necessary expenses." "Well-financed." ""The *Congress-Bundestag Program* is well-funded leaving the participant responsible mostly for pocket-money and travel."

There is no question that the payment of expenses was a major motivating factor for students in choosing the program. Of those who answered the question, more than 69.0% said that finances dictated, at least to some extent, their choosing of a government-sponsored program.

Table 3.15 Program's Payment Of Expenses As Motivating Factor For Choosing Program

	Not at all 1	Hardly 2	Somewhat 3	Big motivating factor 4	Major motivating factor 5
Congress-Bund,	**2.4%**	**0.6%**	**11.4%**	**15.1%**	**67.5%**

Students gave frank comments as to just how important a factor financing was to them: "I needed basic living expenses paid for." "I couldn't have afforded it otherwise." "I was an Au Pair the year prior and had little funding, so this was a large part of my decision." "Could not have gone otherwise."

Other students would have attended even if they had not received any funding: "It was the only program that I considered." "This was a very high quality program. I didn't choose it simply because it was cheap, but the fact that most of my expenses were paid gave me the opportunity to live in Germany." "I did not consider other programs."

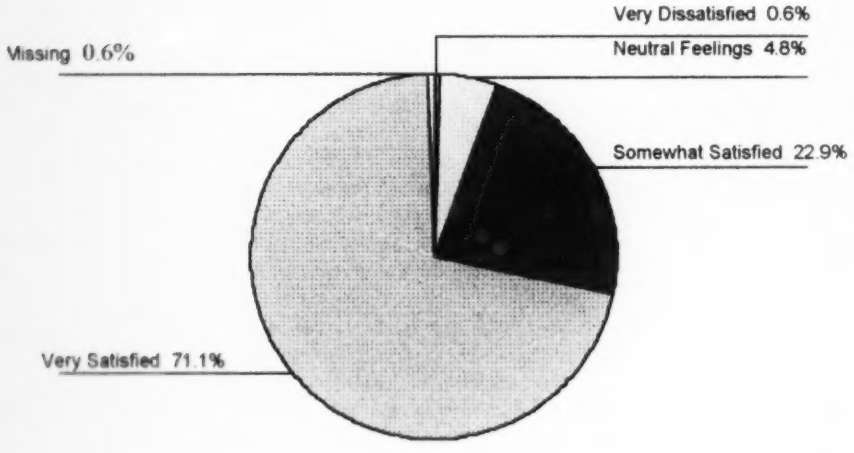
Outcomes

Table 3.16 Overall Satisfaction With The Program

	Very Diss. 1	Diss. 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Sat. 4	Very Sat. 5
Congress-Bundestag	**0.6%**	**0**	**4.8%**	**22.9%**	**71.1%**

Of those who answered the question, 71.1% replied that they were overall very satisfied with the program, while 22.9% reported being somewhat satisfied. Only 0.6% reported being very dissatisfied. Please refer to **Figure 3.6** below.

Figure 3.6 Overall Degree Of Satisfaction



Some students gave elaborate answers as to their overall satisfaction with the program, and the good they got out of it: "Fantastic program! Highly recommendable!!." "My year abroad will remain one of the best years of my life!" "Exceeded my expectations." "This program was great!" "Awesome!" "The coordinating staff for *CDS* were exceptionally professional, helpful and versatile. Their dealings were conducted cheerfully and with great dignity no matter how trying the circumstances." "A terrific program. I'm still in contact with many individuals I met (both American & European)."

While the majority of responses were positive, there were some respondents who were not completely satisfied for one reason or another: "Could have used a little more money." "The initial journey to Radolfzell alone was a nightmare. The lack of information until the last minute (new host families, travel to get to them, new schools to be attended) could have been better organized. Host families and methods of arranging them were questionable in some cases."

At times criticism was tempered with quiet praise for the program: "Despite some major problems, it was a good year." "Support in finding an internship could've been better, everything else was 1st class." "I was one of the handful that achieved satisfaction from the program. I was in the first group of Americans to participate in *CDS*. There were a lot of rough spots to work out and I'm sure in over the ten years they have."

Finally, the following comment is what study abroad coordinators give their life to hear over and over again: "The best year of my life. I would do it all over again in a second."

When students were asked about the best thing which happened to them on the program, they didn't need to be prompted for answers. Some of the responses were personal: "I met my husband." "I saw my grandmother again." "I was able to visit family in Italy and England." "The friends I made there." "Going on ski trip with 20 Germans—I was only foreigner." "My host family became like my own—we are still very close." "The opportunity to meet some wonderful friends." "Living in a *Wohngemeinschaft*. It is basically a house shared by students. It was an awesome experience."

Other respondents felt that improved language ability was a definite plus: "Gained a high level of confidence in spoken German." "Fluency and acceptance in culture and placement in Eastern Germany." "Fluency in German." "Learning German." "I was able to study and be surrounded by a new foreign language for a whole year and meet people whom I truly liked." "I was able to give a short speech on behalf of *CDS* & my fellow students to representatives from the Bundestag & other students at the Schaumburg Palast. Having given so many speeches in German as part of my job, I was ready for it."

Still others felt the best thing that happened to them while on the program was definitely job/career-related: "Working in a company which has helped confirm my career goals, in addition to several new international contacts." "Finding an internship in the area of my choice, paid and insured. Would never find in the USA." "My internship experience at the Landesbank Rheinland-Pfalz."

Finally, there were students who felt that their personal development during the program was the best thing that happened to them: "Broadened my view of the world. Learned what it meant to be an American." "I gained control of the German language and a confidence in myself in the ability to live independently in another country." "The program broadened my understanding of others and myself." "I realized I had lost track of my goals and that I needed to make major changes in my life." "I have become more open-minded and more in contact with my own personal goals & objectives."

Table 3.17 Extent Of Benefits From Attending The Program

	Not worth-while 1	Rarely worth-while 2	Somewhat worth-while 3	Mostly worth-while 4	Worth-while 5	Not Appl. 6
Diff. teach.	7.2%	16.3%	30.1%	19.9%	11.4%	14.5%
Diff. subjects	10.2%	15.7%	16.9%	18.7%	14.5%	23.5%
Oppt. for travel	0	0	3.0%	23 13.9%	82.5%	0
Career benefits	2.4%	2.4%	10.8%	30.7%	53.5%	0
Diff. country /people	0	0.6%	1.2%	16.3%	81.3%	0
FL prof.	0	0.6%	2.4%	22.9%	73.5%	0
Persp. on own country	0	1.8%	7.2%	25.9%	63.9%	0.6%
Know. of host country	0	0.6%	3.0%	25.3%	70.5%	0
Herit.	7.2%	9.6%	18.1%	18.1%	30.7%	15.7%
Break	4.2%	8.4%	12.0%	25.9%	44.6%	4.2%
Intell. persp.	3.0%	9.0%	22.9%	21.1%	39.8%	3.0%
Persp. on own life	0	0.6%	3.0%	24.7%	69.3%	1.2%
Other	0	0	0	1.8%	4.2%	6.0%

More than 81.3 % of students in the sample expressed the fact that they considered meeting persons of the host culture to be worthwhile. More than eighty-two percent considered the benefits from travel to be worthwhile, whereas 73.5% viewed foreign language proficiency as important. Upwards of seventy percent deemed knowledge of the host country to be an important benefit of the program. Among the things participants reported benefiting least from were exposure to different subject matter and other teaching methods while abroad.

When asked if they felt that they would have received the same benefits through a program sponsored by an American college or university, many respondents had quite a bit to say, while others had less: "Not sure."

A majority of students, however, really felt that the experience they received on one of the four surveyed programs allowed them more independence and integration into the host culture than they might have received through American programs: "I do not feel my experience would have been in depth. I was also left to be very independent." "We had lots of interaction with Germans running the program on the German side that one would not get if sponsored by an American college." "Would have had less contact w/ native peoples and more supervision." ""Being the only American in my town forced me into the German culture more than if I'd been with a group of students from the US." "When forced to survive in German culture w/out other American students to "lean on," you learn & experience a heck of a lot more." "English might have been used and tuition might have been more." "I would not have been able to be as independent or to travel as much as I did."

For this sample there was particular concern that traditional American programs would not give them the work experience component, among other things, such as travel, which they took for granted in the *Congress-Bundestag* program: "I may have been offered more subject matter exposure had I been w/ a university programme. I probably had more opportunity to travel as I skipped classes a lot because I knew they weren't necessarily being applied to "at-home" college credits. My career prospects were probably better w/ a govt.-sponsored programme because of work experience

abroad." "Without working, ya miss a lot in a society." "Less professional opportunities."

Still other students felt that the benefits they had received from the particular program would have been the same if it had been American-sponsored: "About the same." "I feel that they would have been close to the same with perhaps less emphasis on travel." "About the same, most likely."

Another student was quite open about his feelings that his program was better than an American-sponsored one: "I feel that the benefits I received from the *CDS* program would have been reduced if the program were American sponsored."

Then there were students who felt just the opposite—that the surveyed program would have been better with the sponsorship of an American college or university: "My academic experience would have been more worthwhile. I would have actually had an educational experience. However, I would not have traveled quite so frequently." "I think that I would prefer a university experience as I have also done that in France & Spain & Costa Rica & Mexico."

Although the majority of students say they were content with the government-sponsored role of their programs, they did not hold back when it came to making suggestions on how to improve the individual programs. The following student had rather sweeping changes to suggest: "They should have treated us as adults—let us decide where we wanted to live and study, given some people more, others less language instruction (*we* decide), allow us to participate in the fun activities and choose something we like better during the dumb ones. Change everything."

Others had more specific changes in mind. "I would have had host situations or rooms already arranged—this was a problem & was done at last minute." "A better cultural orientation—we didn't get enough information about cultural differences. The administrators were mainly concerned that everyone got a job—they need to consider which job each student got, to ensure that the jobs were in the field of study." "More time spent facilitating a suitable academic program. More help with finding a suitable internship." "I wish they would have suggested that I start some sort of German course prior to leaving. I would have liked the German lessons to be a few more months. Job placement would have/might been a little easier." "Not giving us so much info/emphasis on "typical" German. Let us find out for ourselves. Not everyone is "typical."

Some students suggested better alumni contact/follow-up on the program's part: "It would be helpful to have a stronger or more-organized alumni network (newsletter, reunion, etc.). "Definitely follow-up of some kind! Possible reunions or newsletters." "A longer, better more detailed follow-up."

While many students were busy giving suggestions, there were others who felt that changes were not necessary: "Nothing substantial." "I enjoyed the program as is." "I thought our program well-organized." "It was fine the way it was." "None."

Finally, one *Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange* program participant had the following mature attitude about how he made the program work for him: "So much of the program was up to you—If you didn't get out of it what you wanted you mostly had yourself to blame."

When asked if they would recommend their program to someone else, most respondents said they would. In fact, 57.2% said they would recommend the program without reservation, while 25.9% said they would strongly recommend it, and 11.4% would recommend the program on balance. Only 0.6% said they would not recommend the program, while 1.2% would strongly discourage the program.

Table 3.18 Recommending The Program

	Strongly Discourage 1	Not recommend 2	Recomm. On balance 3	Strongly Recommend 4	Recomm. without reservation 5
Congress-Bund.	1.2%	0.6%	11.4%	25.9%	57.2%

Several students further elaborated on why they would recommend their particular program: "This program was one of the best years of my life—I'd love to do it again! My self-confidence and self-esteem increased greatly and I had a great time!" "Any 'other-culture' experience is worthwhile." "Great variety—academics, practical experience through an internship, well-organized, one is very much on her own to make way through the culture/country, although help is available if necessary." "Fantastic program! Highly recommendable!!" "A very worthwhile experience and at a low expense to participants." "My year abroad will remain one of the best years of my life!"

The following students were a bit more hesitant about recommending their program without some reservations: "It would depend on what they (people recommending the program to) thought was possible to achieve by attending." "I went on the first year of my program & I would check into the fine details first, before I strongly recommend this program." "Although I did not really care too much about

the effect of this program on my career options, my program did bill itself as a career-enhancing opportunity. I would hesitate to recommend my program to people who only care about their careers because the jobs the participants get during the program are rarely rewarding." "I would ask about/warn about the fact that there is a conflict in that the *CDS* program based in the USA is career oriented and the *CDG (Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft)* program in Germany is culture oriented."

One student preferred his American sponsored program over his *Congress-Bundestag* program, although he would still recommend the program: "I would recommend my college program stronger, however."

Another student, who strongly discouraged the program, had this to say: "I think people should absolutely get an abroad experience, but under no circumstances whatsoever even consider this program. Those people are worse than ignorant, they are actually dangerous, and do a lot of harm. And they trick you into not complaining through constant reminders of how grateful you should be they are administering gov't money."

While the previous quote might make coordinators hesitate before sending a student abroad, the next quote might encourage them to send many more students into the wild blue yonder. "Nothing can be more beneficial to a young person emerging from the arbitrary worlds of culture and academia in search of him/herself and his future than immersion in a foreign culture. It puts the elements of one's own culture in deep relief and gives a depth of feeling and understanding of the host culture that can be acquired in no other way."

Demographic Questions

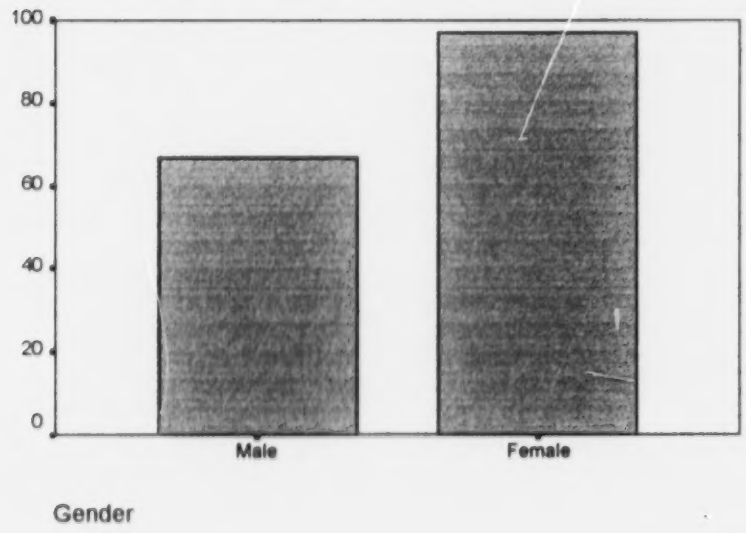
Gender breakdown was uneven, with women outweighing men in the general sample. Overall, there were 67 (40.4%) men and 97 (58.4%) women among the participants, with two missing.

Please see **Figure 3.7** below.

Table 3.19 Gender

	Male 1	Female 2
Stages d'Été pour Professeurs	**23.1%**	**76.9%**
Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange	**40.0%**	**58.4%**
Friedrich Ebert Foundation	**61.5%**	**38.5%**
Friedrich Naumann Foundation	**0**	**100%**

Figure 3.7 Gender



The current age of participants tended to vary, but the majority of participants fell into the age range of 20-29, with 124 or 74.7%, while 40, or 24.1% were between the ages of 30 and 39. There were two in the sample who did not answer this question.

Table 3.20 Current Age

	19 or younger 1	20-29 2	30-39 3	40-49 4	50 or older 5
Congress-Bund.	0	74.7%	24.1%	0	0

The age when respondents actually took part in the programs varied, of course, from the current ages, but the majority of participants (94.6%) still fell into the age range of 20 through 29, while 4.2% were 19 or younger. Please see **Figure 3.8** below.

Figure 3.8 Age When Took Part In Program

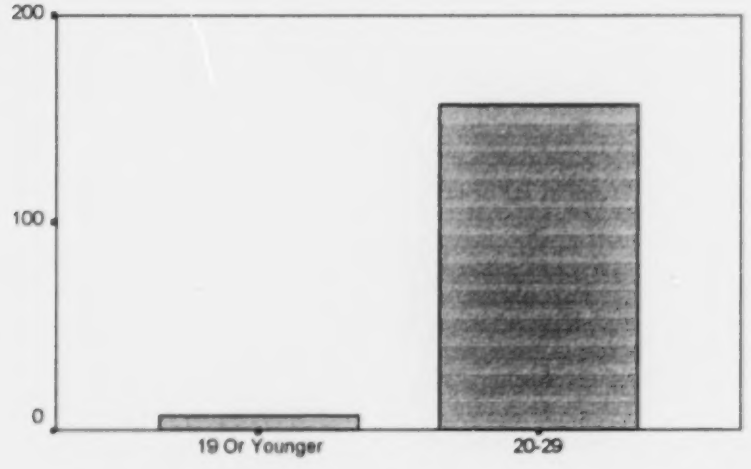


Table 3.21 Age When Took Part In Program

	19 or younger 1	20-29 2	30-39 3	40-49 4	50 or older 5
Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange	4.2%	94.6%	0	0	0

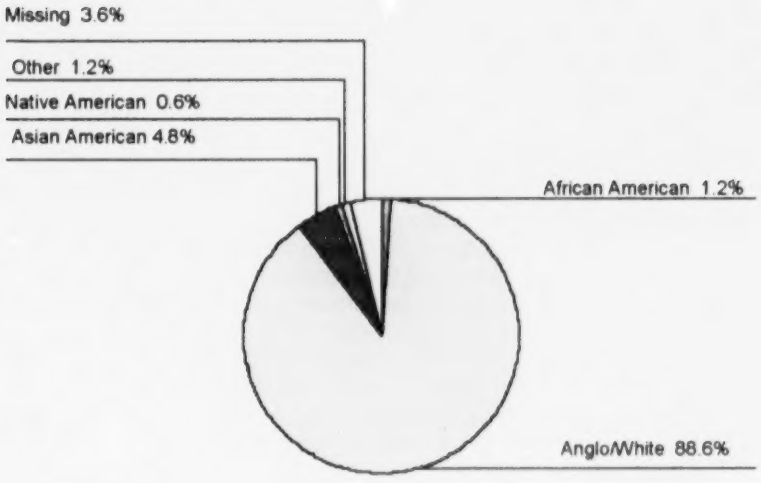
As mentioned previously, ethnicity was primarily White, with African Americans, Asian Americans and one Native American trailing very far behind, and Hispanics not even represented. An overwhelming 88.6% of the sample was Anglo, while Asian Americans followed with 4.8%, African Americans were next with 1.2%, and ONE Native American Student took up the rear with 0.6%. Just under 1.5% identified themselves as "Other." Please refer to **Figure 3.9** on page 43.

What is very obvious in is the great lack of overall ethnic diversity. Perhaps of value to *Congress-Bundestag* program directors would be to engage in more vigorous recruiting of ethnic minorities in the future.

Table 3.22 Ethnicity

	African American 1	Anglo/ White 2	Asian American/Pac Islander 3	Hispanic 4	Native American 5	Other 6
Cong. Bund.	1.2%	88.6%	4.8%	0	0.6%	1.2%

Figure 3.9 Ethnicity



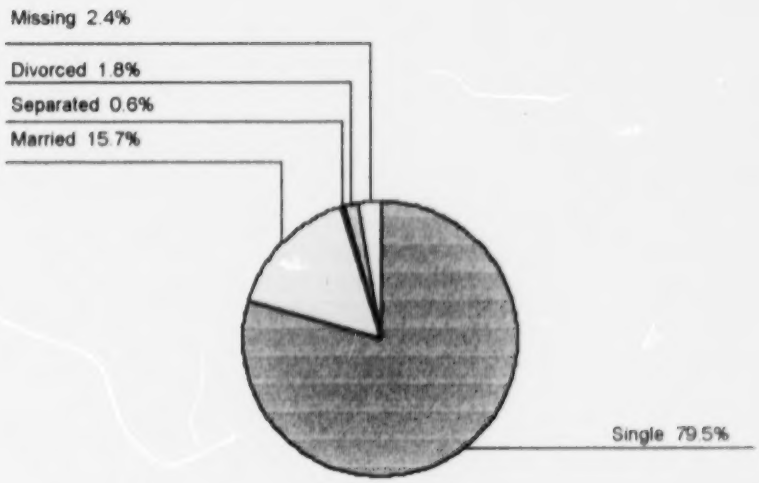
Current marital status depended very much upon the overall age in the program. The older the participants, for example, the more married participants there tended to be.

More than half of all participants in the sample (79.5%) were single, while 15.7% were married, 1.8% divorced, 0.6% separated, and none were widowed. Slightly over two percent were missing. Please see **Figure 3.10** on page 44.

Table 3.23 Current Marital Status

	Single, never been married 1	Married 2	Separated 3	Divorced 4	Widowed 5
Congress-Bund,	**79.5%**	**15.7%**	**0.6%**	**1.8%**	**0**

Figure 3.10 Marital Status



Participants in this program attended a wide range of different institutions of higher learning that ranged from community colleges to prestigious Ivy League schools such as Harvard and Cornell.

Some of the students had gone on to a four-year college or university, but quite a few did not, a two-year college being all the schooling they had before being accepted to the program. It is important that a program such as the *Congress-Bundestag* program exists, giving students with an Associates degree an opportunity to spend a year abroad. With most traditional college/university programs this would not be possible.

Degrees which students earned included Associates degrees, Bachelor of Arts degrees, Bachelor of Science degrees, as well as Master of Arts degrees. It is

interesting how the *CDS* program includes degrees not typical for traditional study abroad programs—Associates and Bachelor of Science degrees, since a majority of those who go abroad through a traditional program are Liberal Arts majors earning a Bachelor of Arts degree.

The former participants in the *Congress-Bundestag* program often had majors in Economics, German, International Studies, and Engineering. In fact, there were quite a few Engineering majors, most likely contributing to the high number of Bachelor of Science degrees within this group. Those students who attended community colleges tended to major in General Studies.

The dates of awarded degrees ranged from the summer of 1984 to 1996. Departure and arrival dates tended to take place in the summer months, with a stay abroad averaging twelve months, usually from July of the previous year to July of the next year.

There were almost as many different answers for what they were doing after returning home from the program as there were respondents to the survey. Students were engaged in full-time work, part-time work, graduate studies, undergraduate studies, starting businesses, keeping house, raising children, unpacking, and blowing glass. Some didn't even bother coming back!

Here is a sampling of some of the activities respondents have pursued since the program ended: "I have been working on my Bachelor's at UIUC. Currently I am on an internship in the Chicago area with Dana Corp." "Furthering my education and working full-time." "Graduate studies and now beginning a career in Consulting Technology for a worldwide firm." "Undergrad. Study in International Business. Now

interning w/ Dept. of State." "The same career that I began as a student in Germany (web page designing)." "Working full-time as an apprentice electrician." "Worked in Japan 2.5 years; KIRIN Beer in Packaging Devlop. Dept.; 2nd Degree; Now Coors Beer, Product Devel. Scientist." "I have been working as a legal assistant and assistant editor since I returned." "Am working this summer in translation company as ESL & German instructor." "Hauling my luggage around." "I just got back yesterday." "I will work half-time and go to school full-time for 2 years."

Student suggestions for changing/improving their programs appeared earlier in this study. However, former participants had yet more ideas for major changes and what should be kept as is. The basic theme for changes was for contact with alumni, better organization, and better screening of host families and living situations. Students wanted to keep meetings and funding, for the most part. What follows is a sampling of the more elaborate suggestions: "More work beforehand w/ students defining career goals & program expectations. (Both from participants & organization). Keep the mid-year gathering of participants, as well as orientation & 'debriefing'—These are very helpful for processing whole experience, creating a reference point, group identity & future network. Keep the excellent financing. Shoot to promote a diverse group—socio-economic, culturally, & regionally diverse. "Orientation before departure. On-site help to find living quarters. Keep meetings with government officials and round table discussions & conferences."

Describing how their particular program had enriched their lives was not difficult for the survey respondents. The answers included better understanding of other cultures, an enriched perspective on the world, improved language ability, career

moves, meeting one's spouse, traveling, and a better understanding of one's self. Here are a few of the more memorable student answers to this question: "The program resulted in my current job as an investment banker as well as introduced me to my current wife (another program participant)." "I feel that I have an enriched view/perspective on world events and personal situations." "Has given me a greater sense of independence and strength." "It was the best, most important year of my life. I experienced things that have helped me as I have gotten older, experiences that have made me stronger and wiser. I have a number of friends now in Germany, with whom I write/speak frequently. Their presence and influence cannot be measured. I see life through new eyes. There's not enough space here to elaborate." "It has greatly increased my German language skills and understanding of the Cold War and the German people. It has enabled me to make friendships; some of them continue today." "Helped me see the world with a broader perspective; mature; realize how small some problems are; appreciate differences in cultures."

The following quotations are a foreign language/social studies teacher's dream—instant advertising, and very inspiring to everyone who reads them: "I have learned another language which allows me to communicate with more people. I have made new friends and visited old ones. I have learned about another country & people in-depth." "To travel is contagious. There are few other ways to broaden one's mind and experiences than to live and participate in another culture." I can't measure or imagine all the ways it has provided perspective, broadened my horizons, changed my career goals. I know that experience was crucial. I would not have been the same, or had the

additional awards/honors/opportunities without it " "As you can tell it has affected all areas of my life

Students were equally eager to convey their beliefs on the importance of study abroad for the future of American higher education, and American society in general "The experience is critical for increasing empathy, understanding other systems, gaining perspective on the USA's positive & negative points, and should be a priority " "Often new corporate ideas are generated by introducing outside participants to the corporate environment, thus bringing a new perspective These diverse mentalities add value to all associated w/ them Students who study abroad have similar opportunities to experience new views on the world and bring these home to share with others Ultimately improving our world (so the theory goes!) "

"It is an experience that cannot be duplicated inside U S borders It's the only way to break US citizens out of our ethnocentricity " "Most Americans still live in 'splendid isolation ' They need to realize that America is only a part of the ever-shrinking world " "Americans need to be less Ameri-centric, and this type of experience offers them this opportunity " "The world market is greater than ever More countries are working together through the economic market and it's a great opportunity to learn about the culture, the way of life, and to just meet these people on a more personal level by living amongst them " "Do it It's great " "In the global economy and society, study abroad is becoming indispensable "

The following two quotations do very well as concluding remarks on the simple fact that study abroad can be an invaluable part of every American's higher education "After returning from abroad, a person simply has a whole new perspective on things

Living in a country like the US, it's very easy to remain ignorant of the world. I think study abroad teaches people to be flexible and open-minded—and AWARE—which they hopefully take back to their family & friends." "As the world becomes smaller and we have MORE interaction with individuals from other countries, it is imperative that we have individuals here who can communicate with and understand those people, their countries, their lives, their actions, their cultures."

Chapter Four: Concluding Remarks

This study concentrated on a data set generated by a forty-one-item questionnaire. The sample in question was composed of one hundred sixty-six former participants of one foreign government-sponsored program, the *Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange*, run by *CDS International* and sponsored roughly 60.0% by the German and 40.0% by the American governments.

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the principal effects of American students who participated in this particular government-sponsored program of Germany, as opposed to the more traditional Junior Year Abroad programs sponsored by American colleges and universities.

Some of the outcomes relating to participation in the program included general satisfaction with funding, which was very generous. Quite a few students mentioned that they would never have been able to participate without the financial help. Students were also very much affected by the travel bug, which took them on treks across both Western and Eastern Europe, and left the most lasting of impressions.

Other effects on these students included an increased appreciation for the culture of the host country, enhanced foreign language proficiency, career boosts, and a greater awareness and understanding of the world, the host country, the United States, and of themselves.

Respondents received various benefits from the government program, including complete funding, immersion within the culture and language, travel opportunities, the meeting of political and cultural dignitaries, the meeting of many host country residents, increased job skills, and memories to last a life-time.

Once they got home, the participants used the experiences they gained abroad. The young professionals of the *Congress-Bundestag* program usually continued the same profession they had learned in Germany. Students also used their target language—German—to further their careers, and to communicate with persons met while traveling, as well as with family and friends from the host country. A few students reported that relationships are still strong, even after many years.

The German government employs certain policies to attract Americans to this program. Funding appeals very much to the majority of prospective applicants. Advertising of the program in brochures and newsletters as well as by word of mouth assures the German government that the program is being promoted. Also, and perhaps most importantly, the Germans promote themselves through the overall quality of the program—measured, of course, by the overall satisfaction of the former participants—which pays for itself in that satisfied students will tell others.

Much can be inferred about the experience of participants in this program and about the effectiveness—or ineffectiveness—of the German policies. There is no doubt that the great amount of satisfaction with the program which the data reveals pays tribute to policy effectiveness in the way of successful job placements of interns while in Germany.

Policy ineffectiveness was exposed through the fact that more than 74.7% of students criticized the administration of the program. These problems included what the students felt to be undesirable family and job placements, ineffective lectures or seminars, insufficient screening of prospective applicants, not enough pre-departure information, and little or no alumni support.

The great lack of racial diversity can also be seen as a direct outcropping of ineffective policy. An increase in advertising to minority populations in the United States is recommended.

Several lessons can be learned form the German experience, which are also applicable to U.S. national policy. Firstly, this program integrates the American students among host country nationals. This results in a greater understanding of the host country culture and its people, as well as greater potential mastery of the target language.

Secondly, the program provides extensive funding to students. When asked why they did not choose an American-sponsored program, more often than not, the reply had to do with the absence of funding.

Thirdly, this German government program offers certain benefits to participants. Specifically, the *Congress-Bundestag* program helped steer students onto career paths which might never have happened without the program.

Fourthly, American policy makers can increase the diversity of American-sponsored study abroad programs by including generously funded work-study programs like the German program, all of which could be targeted towards a specific country and culture.

Suggestions for Further Research

Enough research can never be conducted, in my opinion, on a subject which has the far-reaching ramifications of study abroad. With its ability to teach individuals about the world, about different cultures and languages, and, most importantly, about themselves, study abroad programs go far beyond the results which can be attained in a classroom.

Certainly there are extraordinary teachers who bring geography, social studies, and foreign languages to life, making students feel like they arrived back in the United States after spending a semester or a year "abroad." An experience abroad, whether for a three weeks, six months, or a year, goes beyond the classroom, however, actually transporting students into the homes, families, work-places, universities, libraries, restaurants, subways, buses, trains, and life of a different culture.

The students who responded to the survey often displayed profound emotion in their descriptions of just how their experience abroad changed, forever, their lives as individuals and as Americans. A few even said how stereotypes which they had held of the host culture simply melted away after their experience. Of course the opposite is also possible, and it happened in one or two cases, but this is probably inevitable. The bottom line is that every individual experience which respondents had across the Atlantic helped to build a bridge (however small or unstable) between the United States and Germany.

In order to ensure that those bridges continue to be built, here are some suggestions for further research.

1) It is imperative that studies be conducted on how more students of color can be recruited to represent the United States in programs abroad. Whether the program is sponsored by the U.S. or a foreign government is immaterial in itself. What is of importance is that the true diverse face of this nation be shown to the world. It is unacceptable to be complacent when only two out of the 166 respondents were African Americans, eight were Asians, one was Native American, two were identified as "Other," and none were Hispanics.

Students of color need to be recruited for programs abroad while still in high school; persons ideal for this recruiting would be foreign language, social studies, and geography instructors. Long-term studies should be conducted on just how much intensified recruiting makes a difference.

While in college, minority students should be advised in their freshman year of opportunities (American and foreign-sponsored) abroad. There should be studies conducted which measure the probability that a student takes part in a program when advised about the possibility early in his or her college career. This point cannot be emphasized enough.

2) Studies must be conducted on how to close the gender gap in students going abroad. This study has shown that women significantly outnumber men in the *Congress-Bundestag* program, and studies among American-sponsored programs have shown the same trend: 63% female, 37% male. (Zikopoulos, 1993, p. 90) Male students must be encouraged early—in high school, at the latest—to learn about other cultures through foreign languages, geography and social studies, and that this can be fascinating and fun.

Equally important is to take into account the fact that programs such as the *Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange* encourages students with majors in the sciences and engineering to apply.

More longitudinal studies are necessary which correlate gender and major against application for programs abroad and, if there are significant results, action should be taken to assure that more programs like the *Congress-Bundestag* program come into existence.

3) Studies need to be conducted which measure the effect of increased funding for foreign language instruction beginning at the elementary level on the rate of subsequent participation in study abroad programs. This is extremely important, and the future success of study abroad programs depends upon more foreign language funding.

The fact that foreign languages have often been relegated to the fringe of public education, along with art, music, dance, etc., has made American students assume that foreign languages are unimportant.

In closing, it is once more fitting to listen to those students who have "been there, done that," as the cliché goes. Certainly the valuable lessons which students of the *Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals* have undoubtedly learned and carry close to their hearts are not superficial.

"Sounds cliché, but it 'broadens' one's perspective. Foreign work/travel has been a critical component of liberal/humanist education since the Middle Ages. Worked then, works now." "Such programs are invaluable to intercultural relations. It [sic] gives students the opportunity to see the world from another culture's point of view." "I have learned how narrow my perspective on my own country was. I appreciate my culture & others much more & feel energized by how possible it is for me to see the world—I have gained confidence & independence." "I really don't think the experiences I gained through this exchange could ever be taught/learned in a classroom atmosphere."

The effects which the program had on the respondents included exhilarating, inspiring, frustrating, happy, sad, upsetting, and joyful experiences. It is important to remember that programs sponsored by other governments, including the United States, can have equally intense effects on participants.

The lesson is, therefore, to encourage policy makers in this country and abroad to create, as well as to continue programs with features similar to the program surveyed here, i.e., funding and the specific focus of the program. This way it can be assured that individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds and disciplines may be able to take part in a study/work abroad program in the future. The future of our world, as well as our nation, depends upon it.

"Many American students know painfully little about other cultures or history or even geography which results in a severe case of American-centered isolationism. My world view is globally-oriented now. I appreciate, respect, and am curious about other cultures, customs, traditions, and languages."

"I feel that as Americans, we have a responsibility to learn more about other cultures and countries given the extreme influence that our nation has in the world. Programs such as the *Congress-Bundestag Program* are necessary in order to provide citizens with a broader view of the world community for the benefit for [sic] the U.S. and other nations."

Appendix A

June 23, 1997

Dear former participant in a German government-sponsored program:

I am presently a Ph.D. student in education at the Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California. My doctoral dissertation addresses the following topic: *The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals: What are the Effects on U.S. Students?*

This topic will be studied from two different angles. On the one hand, I will examine how the government in question has invested its resources in programs it sponsors for American students. I will evaluate the evidence bearing on whether the Germany appears to be getting a reasonable return on its investment in terms of national interest. The vantage point here will be from the point of view of the government, Germany. On the other hand, I will attempt to describe the **effect** – changed attitudes about Germany, and world views more generally on the American students who have participated in this program in recent years.

This is where you come in! A substantial part of my research depends on your responses. Because the overall sample is small, your participation is particularly important. TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNIARE SHOULD NOT TAKE YOU LONGER THAN 10-15 MINUTES.

I hope that you will be able to return the completed survey as soon as possible.

I will be more than happy to answer any questions you have concerning any particular aspect of the questionnaire. Please address all questions to:

Iris Dolores Thot
c/o: Claremont Graduate University
Center for Educational Studies
150 East Tenth St.
Claremont, CA 91711-6160

(909) 621-8075
FAX: (909) 621-8734
E-mail: Iris.Thot@cgu.edu

I thank you in advance for your participation in the survey.

Sincerely,

Iris Dolores Thot
Project on Program Effectiveness

Appendix B

The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals: What are the Effects on U.S. Students?

A Survey for Former Participants

The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals: What are the Effects on U.S. Students?

This survey is organized according to: A) Program of Participation, B) Choosing a Program, C) Education, D) Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Experiences, E) Financing, F) Outcomes, G) Demographics, and H) Summation Questions.

A. Program of Participation

1) Please list the date (month/year) during which you participated in the program:

_____ _____

From: To:

B. Choosing a Program

2) How did you learn about the existence of the German government-sponsored program which you chose?

_____ Written information from the academic department or American institution of higher education in which I was enrolled.

_____ Written information on the program itself (e.g. brochure, etc.)

_____ Poster

_____ Faculty member, academic advisor, counselor

_____ Special information meeting(s)

_____ "Word of mouth" from former participant

_____ "Word of mouth" from fellow students/friends

_____ Other: _____

Additional comments:

3) Please describe what led you to decide on a German government-sponsored program rather than on a program sponsored by an American college/university.

4) To what extent did each of the following reasons influence your decision to study abroad?

	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT				VERY IMPORTANT
a) To pursue specific academic interest	1	2	3	4	5
b) To obtain better grades	1	2	3	4	5
c) To become acquainted with teaching methods other than those at my univ.	1	2	3	4	5
d) Desire to travel abroad	1	2	3	4	5

(Continued...)

	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT				VERY IMPORTANT
e) To live in/make acquaintances from another country/culture	1	2	3	4	5
f) To be with/near friends who were going abroad	1	2	3	4	5
g) To gain additional perspective on my home country	1	2	3	4	5
h) To enhance my understanding of my host country	1	2	3	4	5
i) To provide a break from routine	1	2	3	4	5
j) To improve my language skills –					
_____1) by achieving fluency in German	1	2	3	4	5
_____2) by improving my German	1	2	3	4	5
k) To improve my career prospects –					
_____ 1) through contacts abroad	1	2	3	4	5
_____ 2) through fluency in German	1	2	3	4	5
_____ 3) because of having studied in Germany	1	2	3	4	5
l) To study in a particular country	1	2	3	4	5
m) To "get away from it all"	1	2	3	4	5
n) Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

4) Who most influenced your desire to study abroad? Indicate only the two most influential. Place a "1" next to the most influential, and a "2" next to the second most influential.

_____ Primarily my own
_____ Brother/sister
_____ Parent(s)
_____ Friends(s) in home country
_____ Friend(s) in host country
_____ Teacher/faculty member
_____ Advisor/counselor
_____ Other: _____

6) What is the **most** important reason you chose your particular program?

_____

Additional comments:

7) Did you apply to more than one program? _____ Yes _____ No

8) Were you accepted to more than one program? _____ Yes _____ No

9) Would you have preferred another program had you been accepted by it?

_____ Yes. Please explain _____

_____ No

C. Educational Components

10) To what extent were your classes taught in the language of the host country?

_____ All the time _____ Part of the time _____ Never

Additional comments:

11) What was your knowledge of the host country language upon entering the program? Please place an "X" in the appropriate columns.

Minimal = Individual is generally only able to reproduce rehearsed words and phrases.

Moderate = Individual is able to begin producing language; although the produced language still has errors, this stage is marked by the emergence of early created speech.

Highly Proficient = Individual can produce creative language, although there are still barriers to full expression.

Fluent = Individual is fully functional in the language.

	Minimal	Moderate	Highly Proficient	Fluent
Speaking	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____	_____
Writing	_____	_____	_____	_____

12) What was your knowledge of the target language upon completing the program? Please place an "X" in the appropriate columns.

	Minimal	Moderate	Highly Proficient	Fluent
Speaking	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____	_____
Writing	_____	_____	_____	_____

13) To what extent did you have significant problems in any of the following areas during your study period abroad?

	MINIMAL OR NONE				SERIOUS PROBLEMS
a) Taking courses/exams in a foreign language	1	2	3	4	5
b) Academic level of courses too advanced	1	2	3	4	5
c) Academic level of courses too easy	1	2	3	4	5
d) Differences in teaching/learning methods (between home and host institution)	1	2	3	4	5
e) Readiness on part of teaching staff to meet and/or help foreign students	1	2	3	4	5
f) Differences in class size or student project group size	1	2	3	4	5

(Continued...)

	MINIMAL OR NONE				SERIOUS PROBLEMS
g) Efficiency in administration	1	2	3	4	5
h) Climate	1	2	3	4	5
i) Food	1	2	3	4	5
j) Health	1	2	3	4	5
k) Lifestyles of nationals in host country	1	2	3	4	5
m) Communicating in a foreign language outside the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
n) Not enough time available for travel	1	2	3	4	5
o) Other	1	2	3	4	5

14) What do you consider to be the **overall** quality of the academic experience you received through the program?

POOR				OUTSTANDING
1	2	3	4	5

Please elaborate:

15) To what extent, if any, do you feel that your particular government-sponsored program engaged in "indoctrination" as distinguished from "objective" teaching activities?

NO INDOCTRINATION			MUCH INDOCTRINATION	
1	2	3	4	5

Additional Comments:

D. Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Experiences

	16a) Please indicate the frequency with which you spent time in each category of activity during your study period abroad.					16b) With what level of satisfaction?				
	NEVER				VERY FREQUENTLY	LOW				HIGH
a) Participating in sports	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
b) Performing in music, drama, arts, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
c) Doing hobby or craftwork -electronics, gardening, photography,	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
d) Participating in clubs -political, religious, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

(Continued...)

	NEVER				VERY FREQUENTLY	LOW				HIGH
e) Working –paid work, volunteer work, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
f) Visiting museums, attending concerts, theater, cinema, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
g) Socializing, going to cafés, discos, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
h) Attending sports events spectator sports	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
i) Traveling independently	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
j) Reading -literature other than coursework	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
k) Watching television	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
l) Participating in program-organized events	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
m) Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

17) Please elaborate on any activities done through the program that you would have been less likely to pursue at home.

18) Approximately how many days did you travel outside the immediate area of the university or other institution in which the program was located? (include weekends and vacations)

Days Spent In Travel	Immediately Prior to Program	During Program (including between terms)	After End of Program
None at all	_____	_____	_____
Up to 10 days	_____	_____	_____
11-20 days	_____	_____	_____
21-30 days	_____	_____	_____
More than 30 days	_____	_____	_____

19) What were your most rewarding travel experiences? Why?

20) To what extent did the program enable you to have contact with the following people while abroad?

	NO OPPORTUNITY				LOTS OF OPPORTUNITY
a) Students of the host country	1	2	3	4	5
b) Teaching staff of the host country	1	2	3	4	5
c) People from outside the university	1	2	3	4	5
d) Cultural figures from the host country	1	2	3	4	5
e) Government figures from the host country	1	2	3	4	5
f) Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

21) If you indicated in # 20 that you met people involved in culture and/or government from the host government, did your program facilitate those meetings?

_____ Yes _____ No

Please elaborate:

E. Financing

22) To what extent were your expenses (e.g., room and board, tuition, airfare, in-country travel) paid for by the particular program?

NOT AT ALL		ABOUT HALF		TO A GREAT EXTENT
1	2	3	4	5

Additional comments:

23) To what extent was the program's payment of expenses a motivating factor for you in choosing your program over other programs?

NOT AT ALL		SOME WHAT		MAJOR MOTIVATING FACTOR
1	2	3	4	5

Additional comments:

F. Outcomes

24) Considering all aspects of the program, what is the degree of your overall satisfaction?

VERY DISSATISFIED				VERY SATISFIED
1	2	3	4	5

Additional comments:

25) What was the **best** thing that happened to you while attending the program?

26) To what extent did you benefit from attending the program with respect to the following? NA = Not applicable.

	NOT WORTH-WHILE				WORTH-WHILE	NA
a) Exposure to teaching methods other than those adopted at my home institution	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b) Exposure to subject matter not offered at my home institution	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c) Opportunity to travel	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d) Enhanced career prospects	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e) Acquaintance with people of another country	1	2	3	4	5	NA
f) Foreign language proficiency	1	2	3	4	5	NA
g) Perspective on my home country	1	2	3	4	5	NA
h) Knowledge and understanding of the host country	1	2	3	4	5	NA
i) Acquaintance with my family/ethnic heritage	1	2	3	4	5	NA
j) Break from my usual surroundings and routines	1	2	3	4	5	NA
k) Exposure to other intellectual perspectives in my field	1	2	3	4	5	NA
l) Perspectives gained on my own life	1	2	3	4	5	NA
m) Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	NA

27) In retrospect, to what extent do you feel that you would have received any of the benefits listed in # 26 from a program abroad sponsored by an American college/university?

28) What specific changes would you propose for your particular program? (Consider preparation and follow-up in your home country, as well as the actual time spent abroad).

29) If you were again making a similar choice or advising a friend, would you recommend your program, or would you recommend another program?

_____ Recommend without reservation

_____ Strongly recommend

_____ Recommend on balance

_____ Not recommend

_____ Strongly discourage

Please elaborate:

G. Demographic Questions

30) What is your gender? ( ) Male ( ) Female

31) What is your current age? ( ) 19 or younger ( ) 20-29 ( ) 30-39 ( ) 40-49 ( ) 50 or older

32) What was your age when you participated in the program? ( ) 19 or younger ( ) 20-29 ( ) 30-39 ( ) 40-49 ( ) 50 or older

33) What is your ethnicity? ( ) African American/Black ( ) Anglo/White ( ) Asian American/Pacific Islander ( ) Hispanic ( ) Native American/American Indian ( ) Other: _____

34) What is your current marital status?

( ) Single, never been married ( ) Married ( ) Separated ( ) Divorced ( ) Widowed

35) Please list all the colleges/universities you have attended in the U.S., as well as all corresponding majors, degrees, and dates of degree.

Name of Institution	Degree Completed	Major(s)	Date of Degree
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

36) What was your approximate departure date for the program? _____/____ Month/Year

37) What was your approximate arrival date back in the U.S. after the program? _____/_____ Month/Year

38) What have you been doing since arriving back in the U.S. (e.g., principally in graduate/professional studies, working full-time, housekeeping, series of part-time jobs)?

H. Summation Questions

39) Imagine that you are on the organizing committee for the program you attended. What major changes would you recommend? What features would you be sure to keep?

40) Please describe how this program has enriched your life (if it has).

41) If you had an opportunity to meet with an important policymaker on the topic of study abroad, what would you emphasize to him/her about the importance of study abroad opportunities for American students in higher education?

- If you would like to receive summary information describing the results of this questionnaire, please fill out the following information or contact me at the address below:

_____ (Name)

_____ (Address)

_____ (City, State, Zip Code)

_____ (E-mail address, if available)

- Please mail the survey to:

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Thank you (Danke!) for participating in this survey!